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566 17. Alhassan—younger brother of Ndakó Tétengi. Lives with him on the farm.

18. Suleiman Maidunki—in Bida. His father was a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru. He is a tailor by profession—*Maidunki* means tailor (in Hausa). Cf. No. 8.

19. Kolo Langbogu—on a farm near Wuya. He obtained his land through his patron.

665 566 The social significance of clientship reveals itself, finally, in the formation of political factions. Every man of rank and standing collects round him a smaller or larger group of followers, henchmen, and clients, their families, their sons, brothers, and friends, who come to look upon this man as their protector and patron. The people of rank themselves are organized similarly, on a higher plane: we have seen how they attach themselves to a royal prince from whom they expect favours, support, and, some of them, promotion to an important office or rich fief. Let me try to reduce to figures this manifold system of integration that is the result of patronage and clientship. The old *Shaba* of Bida (as our list shows) had still in the days of his waning influence nineteen *bara*. Then there were his sons and younger brothers with their *bara*—some forty men altogether (not counting women and children). Of the other nobility, members of the royal house of Umaru Majigi to which he himself belonged, and members of the *saraki* nobility bearing allegiance to this house, some eight or ten were attached to the old man in personal allegiance, each of them with his own *bara*, bringing the total to over a hundred. The number of peasants, commoners, small traders, and Mallams who, living in his neighbourhood or on one of his *tunga*, regarded themselves as his clients in a looser sense, I can only guess. In Bida itself their group included all the streets round his house, twenty to thirty houses, and the people from this group would come to the *Shaba* or any important member of his faction, whenever they were in need of advice or protection. The following of the *Shaba* must thus have amounted to over 400 men, a thousand if we count their whole families, in a town of 30,000.

665 579 754 683 What was said earlier in this chapter about the division of Bida into local factions or 'wards' is now fully explained. You can map out the whole of Bida in such areas of personal influence and patronage. Rivalry and feuds between the leaders of the local factions may throw the whole town, indeed the whole country, into a civil war. This is what happened not long ago. In 1931 the trial of a witch in Bida had deeply stirred the passions of the people. A certain woman in the *efu* of the *Sokyara*, a powerful nobleman, though not at the time in favour at the court, was believed to be a witch and was accused by the people of the *efu* of having caused several deaths and cases of mysterious illness. The people feeling themselves menaced by her presence appealed for help to their patron, the *Sokyara*, who decided to expel the woman from his *efu*. She appealed to the *Etsu* and the *Alkali*; summoned before the court, she swore on the Koran that she was innocent, whereupon the *Alkali* let her go and dismissed the case. This to the enraged people appeared as a farce. The anti-witchcraft society to which the people of Nupe for-

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merly used to entrust the discovery and punishment of witches had been forbidden some ten years previously. The modern method of obtaining protection against a witch, through the medium of the law courts, had evidently failed. Moreover, the people were aware of the enmity that existed between their patron and a powerful faction at the king's court, especially between the *Sokyara* and a certain favourite of the ruling *Etsu*, the *Uban Dawaki*, who had recently obtained his rank by what had seemed to many gross favouritism. The action of the *Alkali*, who was known to belong to the same faction, was supposed to be prompted by the wish to please the *Etsu*'s favourite and to discredit his rival. Enraged, and despairing of any other way out, the people took the law into their own hands and stoned the alleged witch and her daughters on their way home from the courthouse. Then the fight between the two factions flared up openly. Although certain members of the king's household had, as it was revealed later during the official investigation, taken part in the stoning of the witches, the *Etsu* accused the *Sokyara* and had him and his whole family arrested. The *Sokyara* and his brother managed to escape, and hid in their house. When this became known in the town the people of the *Uban Dawaki* faction thought this a good opportunity to deal the rival faction their death-blow. They set fire to the house of the *Sokyara*, who sought safety in flight while his brother died in the flames. Later the *Uban Dawaki* party tried to throw the blame on the *Sokyara* and accused him of having himself started the fire. Bida was in upheaval, the *Etsu* powerless, or pretending to be powerless, and only after the sternest measures could the government establish peace.

But we need not go to this extreme case to demonstrate the reality of this system of political factions.[1] Extend the 'circles within circles' of patronage and clientship wider and wider till they are bounded by the widest circumference—the three dynastic *ekpā*—and you understand their full import. Patronage and clientship are only small meshes in a texture which envelops the whole social life of the kingdom.

SOCIAL CLASS IN NUPE

The foregoing description has revealed a system of social gradation of remarkable thoroughness and indeed conspicuousness. We can speak of Nupe as a typical class society. But hitherto we have touched upon only one aspect of social stratification, namely, social differentiation so far as it results from differentiation in political rights and duties. We have studied social barriers—the barriers of rank and grade—where they are pivoted in the political structure. We have yet to learn the full extent of their influence upon the life of society at large and their relation to other trends of social stratification.

Social class is a complex phenomenon, the resultant of many factors,

[1] There is another hardly less drastic illustration: in April 1936 the same *Uban Dawaki* fell ill. At once rumour had it that he had been poisoned by the *Maiyaki*, an old enemy of his who was said to be jealous of the large following which the *Uban Dawaki*, though his junior in rank, could boast. That the medical officer diagnosed lung trouble did little to abate the rumour.

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561 796 sub-tribe of Kutigi, Enagi, and Dabbā, the *gani* even dramatizes the age-grade structure itself, its system of ranks, and the promotion from grade to grade. The *gani* assigns different ceremonial duties to the different grades, and involves certain symbolic tests of manhood of progressive severity which the different age-grades, one after the other, must undergo. The ceremony can, in fact, be regarded as a ritual of age-grade initiation. However, I must leave the description of this ceremony, closely associated though it is with the conception of age-grades, for a future occasion.

Let us turn to the Mohammedan religious ceremonies. At the celebration of the *Sallah* the age-grade associations play a much less specific role. They arrange a small festivity in the house of their group captains on the eve of the *Sallah*, at which—as in all houses of Bida and Mohammedan Nupe on that evening—a ram is killed and eaten. On the following morning the various *ena* of the town meet in the market to join the thousands of people who will follow the royal procession to the mosque and round the town walls, and gather later in front of the Emir's house, listening to drummers and musicians, and watching the display of the horsemen and the coming and going of the royal guests.

The celebration of the Mohammedan New Year, on the other hand, called *navũ* in Nupe (lit. torches), represents the climax of the public appearances of the Bida *ena*. The *navũ* is essentially a festival of youth. Its ritual acts, which appear to express, symbolically, the death and renewal of the year, are carried out by the young folk of Bida. On the eve of the New Year, at sunset, all the age-grade associations meet in the houses of their captains, and then march to the market of their town quarter, where all the associations of the *ekpā* forgather. They carry burning torches of grass in their hands, and are clad in simple, scanty garments. Three long processions, one in each *ekpā*, move slowly through the streets of Bida, down to the arm of the river flowing through that part of the town. The boys sing and dance while they walk, and throw their torches high up in the air, catching them as they fall. Arrived at the river, they take off their garments, and, clad only in a loincloth, wade into the water. There is no atmosphere of ritual or ceremony about it; they splash and play in the water, dance, wrestle, sing, and laugh at the clumsiness of those who drop and extinguish their torches. All the time the torch-play goes on; they play with the torches like balls, throwing and catching them. It is a dangerous game: I saw many lucky escapes, and quite a few incidents not so lucky.

561 796 786 579 Girls and young women, too, go to the river to bathe on the *navũ*, and the sexual attraction adds its stimulus to the general excitement. The *navũ* is, in fact, the only occasion on which I have seen the Nupe indulge in open, undisguised, sexual play. Torches are thrown into the water to light up the spot where girls are bathing almost naked; boys accost girls in the water, and couples disappear in the dark of the riverbanks. But the *navũ* is in more than one respect a period of licence. Indeed, more important than this amorous play is the licence which was extended till about fifteen years ago to all acts of violence and assault that might occur on *navũ* night. And such liberty of action was not

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limited to acts of violence committed unwittingly, in the course of the torch throwing and playful fighting. The torch processions invariably led to serious organized fights between the three *ena* groups from the three divisions of the town. On their way back from the river one *ena* would ambush another, and try to invade its 'territory'. A fierce fight would ensue, lasting the whole night, fought with torches, sticks, stones, and even formerly (as my older informants maintained) with swords and guns. Serious wounds and loss of eyesight were a common feature of these 'battles of youth', which were fought with all the violence of heated party feuds. For party feuds they were—inspired by the political rivalry that is embodied in the threefold dynastic division of the kingdom. Let us reflect that the *navũ* provides the only occasion at which all the scattered age-grade groups of Bida are united in common action. The unity which they achieve is typical of Bida society—a unity based on partisanship and political factions. The acts of violence committed in the *navũ* fights led the Administration to intervene, and the fights were forbidden under *Etsu* Bello. Yet the memory is still vividly alive. Younger and older men who have once participated in a fight still proudly recount their feats which helped their side to win. But even young boys, novices at the *navũ*, are aware of the traditional significance of the ceremony. At the *navũ* of 1936 schoolboys from the Middle School had been encouraged by their teachers to send, for the first time, an official contingent to the *navũ* procession and to take their place among the age-grade groups. The boys did not anticipate a 'proper' *navũ*; for, as they explained to the director of the school, if they were to behave according to traditional standards, 'the *yan doka* (police) would get nasty'.

Certain important activities and obligations embodied in the age-grade association outlive the lifetime of the *ena* and accompany the individual through his whole adult life. The celebration of kinship events with the co-operation of age-grade associations is a first instance. All members of an *ena* are required to appear at the kinship feasts celebrated in the house of one of the *ena* members, and this duty applies both to comrades and ex-comrades. When a man celebrates the naming ceremony of a new-born child, or the wedding of himself or a close relative, or when he buries his father or elder brother, he will expect all his old comrades to come, to bring their congratulations or condolences, and to join the family guests. The Nupe greatly appreciate kinship festivities on an imposing scale, with a large—and generous—attendance. Age-grade loyalty is thus enlisted to make the festivities a success and to add to the prestige of the host. The readiness of the ex-members of an *ena* to fulfil these social obligations towards an old comrade depends, however, on the rank which he had held in the *ena*, and on the popularity which he enjoyed among his fellow members. If the age-grade association is thus designed to contribute to the social prestige of its ex-members in adult life, this dependence on the goodwill of one's comrades must, in anticipation, act as an important controlling influence upon behaviour in the age-grade association itself.

There exists also a certain clearly formulated code of conduct which